

March 16, 2014

Environment Committee Testimony

Re: [H.B. No. 5416](#), AN ACT ESTABLISHING A LIVESTOCK CARE STANDARDS
ADVISORY COUNCIL AND PROHIBITING THE USE OF CERTAIN ENCLOSURES FOR
GESTATING SOWS.

We are writing today to urge you to support HB 5416 (Section 2), which would ban the use of gestation crates for sows in Connecticut. As you may know, a gestation crate—commonly used on factory farms where any fleeting concern for animal welfare is dwarfed by a concern for efficiency and profit, unlike the small, family farms that characterize much of rural Connecticut—is a metal cage in which a mother pig lives in a state of virtual immobility as she is repeatedly impregnated to supply the pork industry with upwards of twenty piglets a year. Despite the availability of viable alternatives to this practice, and the well-documented evidence of its physical and psychological effects on pigs (animals widely considered to be as intelligent and emotionally complex as dogs and some primates), many states—including Connecticut—have not yet banned the use of gestation crates.

However, it is noteworthy that McDonalds, Burger King, and Oscar Mayer, among several other fast food restaurant chains and convenience food companies, have moved to stop the use of gestation crates for sows in their supply chains. If even these companies—not exactly bastions of “animal welfare”—have recognized the inherent and unnecessary cruelty of this practice, there can be no convincing argument for its perpetuation. Nine states have already banned the use of gestation crates, and Connecticut stands to be the tenth. Years from now, people will look back at the use of gestation crates with the same confusion and revulsion with which we currently view the ill-conceived and barbaric practices of bygone eras: “How could people have *allowed* that?” our descendants will ask, staring at photographs of countless sows gnawing at the iron bars of their cages, waiting for their next impregnation. Connecticut now has the opportunity to say that it *doesn't* allow that, that needless and senseless cruelty doesn't have a place within its borders. Please support HB 5416 (Section 2).

Sincerely,

Anthony and Caitlin Sorge